

Doing the Dishes

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Summary: Noble Six and Tobry Lager are doing the dishes; which Six doesn't think should be any fun at all. Somehow, they both agree that there isn't anywhere they would rather be. A moment of fluffy fluffiness. Written for TheHaloFreak. Oneshot.

Doing the Dishes

****Author's Note:** More crossover! This was a Christmas present for TheHaloFreak. It makes the most sense if you read This Side of You, which can be found on my profile first. But if you don't really care that much, then this is about Tobry Lager and my sister's Halo Reach character. I still haven't read the Tainted Realm, but I have been told all about Tobry. I can't think what else to say. This hasn't been beta'd, bad grammar is my responsibility. Halo is the property of Microsoft and 343 Industries or Bungie or however all that company switching works. Tainted Realm is the property of Ian Irvine. I think that's it... ******

****Pancakes and enjoy!**
>-BarbedWire

Once upon a time the world had made perfect sense. She was SPARTAN B-312 and the only friend she ever needed was her DMR.

Then she had to meet Tobry Lager, and he was obnoxious and hilarious and made her feel a thousand things that she had never imagined. And the world didn't make sense anymore; he'd turned everything she knew on its head. She was more than just SPARTAN B-312 now, and she needed more than her familiar weapon.

But the part that made the least amount of sense was that she didn't even miss the way the world had been. Back when everything was either a green or red dot on her radar. It had been simple before, it had made sense, but she was having more fun now than she could have ever imagined. There was nothing in the whole world, even the glorious

success of battle or the terror on a Jackal's face when she kicked out his shield, that could compare with the feeling of Tobry's arms around her. Nothing could be more beautiful than the sound of his laughter in her ear. Tobry was happiness, it was as simple as that, and as complicated as that. When he was with her, whatever they were doing, she had a good time. When he wasn't, even things that she loved seemed to be missing something. Which made no sense because really, who would rather do dishes than target shoot? But nowadays, if Tobry was at the dishes party and not at the shooting range, she would really have to think about it. Despite all the confusion and nonsensicalness, she could not shake the feeling that her life was more complete now than it had ever been.

"It's your turn to rinse," smirked Tobry, as he filled the sinks with water. Six made a face at him, ignoring the near constant feeling of vulnerability that came from going about without her helmet. She hated that about Tobry, that he made her feel more vulnerable than anything in her life had ever made her. it didn't matter if the helmet was on or not anymore, if Tobry was looking at her, she felt as though she was naked in front of him. Like he could see into the very depths of her, to all the things she quietly wanted and feared and dreamt of. All her secrets were laid bare by a single glance from Tobry. And she liked it. No one else in the world was allowed to know anything deeper than the number of enemies she had killed, but if Tobry wanted to peer into her very soul on a whim, then she could only stand there, exposed and slightly afraid and let him. She hated that, that although she was terrified of the ferocity with which she needed him, she could not bring herself to stop him. because on some level, she was grateful for every secret Tobry pulled out of her heart with his keen gaze. Everything he knew about her was a gift, especially the things she did not want him to know. The part of her that was not just a super soldier, the part that liked to blush and watch the sunlight catch off the fur on Tobry's face felt like it had been waiting forever and ever for someone to make her vulnerable. She had no idea why part of her would want what she had spent her whole life striving to leave behind, but she had no idea about almost everything to do with Tobry.

"Who ever said we would take turns?" she shot back at him. Tobry's answering smirk was actually enough to cause her to forget if she even cared who rinsed or not.

"Well, Soldier, I just thought since that would be the fair way to do this." She wanted to tell him how ridiculous he was. How nothing about him was fair. It wasn't fair that he made her confused and vulnerable. It wasn't fair that he was the funniest person she had ever known, or that she had no idea what she would do if he suddenly vanished from her life. It was certainly not fair that she liked him more than she had ever liked anyone else in the world.

"Who said I care about fair, Fuzz Face?" it did occur to her that she was asking two pointless questions one after another. But that would have to be Tobry's problem. It was extremely probable that he was seeing through her anyway; that he knew that she really didn't care if anything was fair or not fair as long as she got to spend time with him. The world could settle its own scores.

Without another word, Tobry began to plop the dirty dishes one by one into the soapy water, effectively ending the pointless debated. Honestly, Six couldn't care less, as she removed her gloves and

prepared to rinse off the dishes.

"Rinsing is easier." Tobry remarked, as he passed her a newly cleaned plate. She dipped the plate in the water and removed all the suds before she bothered to reply to him. Easy was another thing the world was no longer. It had been, sometime long before she'd met him when the only thing she ever had to worry about was battle. But the ease was joined hand in hand with the simplicity of her life then, and just as Tobry had introduced complication after complication to her world with his cocky grin, so had he taken away all the easiness. Easy was a world where the only thing that was ever at risk was your life. Where you knew exactly for what ideals or worlds or hopes you would gladly give even that up. Easy was the calm of training and the excitement of battle; reloading your weapon to empty another magazine into the loudly protesting jaws of an elite.

That was not what the world was any more. Now there was Tobry, and she suddenly had a whole other world of things that she could lose. Her life was not the only thing constantly on the line, and now she didn't even have the safe haven of her armor to protect herself. She knew what she would gladly give her life for, but the conviction with which she knew she would die a thousand times if it would save that fuzzy faced, kilt wearing, cat boy terrified her. Never had any one person meant hardly anything at all to her, and here he was, this annoying, arrogant, cocky pest to march into her life and change all that.

"SPARTANS don't like to take the easy way out." She said, even she had no idea if she was talking about the dishes any more. "The real easy route would have been to make you do them all by yourself. Then I could be doing whatever I wanted."

To her intense irritation, instead of being grateful for the help she was condescending to give him, Tobry laughed.

"And what would you rather be doing, Noble Six?"

The truth was nothing. There was nothing that she would rather be doing if Tobry was here. But naturally she couldn't tell him that, no good would come from Tobry knowing how amazing and important he was to her. All that would do was inflate his ego, and although she loved his confidence, and even his cockiness he did not need to know. To avoid telling the truth, she merely shrugged.

"Anything but the dishes."

"It's a good thing I didn't just leave you to do them by yourself then." He accompanied his teasing by splashing some of the dish water at her.

"Forgetting who the one with the gun is?" she responded, using the plate she was rinsing to deflect the sudsy water away from her face.

"Which you would never use on me." Tobry stated matter-of-factly, passing her a bowl to be rinsed.

"Don't be so sure." She muttered into the now faintly sudsy rinse water.

They spent the next few minutes just washing the dishes without any conversation. Which was okay with Six, because really there was too much going on in her head to make conversation easy any way. There was so much wrong with this. She was doing the goddamned dishes, and she was happy. She must be losing her mind. Only a crazy person could find the presence of this obnoxious man enough to make doing the dishes an enjoyable experience. Which scared Six, because she was finding herself increasingly certain that she was in fact out of her mind, and she was also finding that she increasingly didn't care. Tobry had driven her insane, he'd made a fool out of her and she had a steadfast rule about becoming a fool for anyone. Yet, Six had no regrets.

"Why are you here?" she asked Tobry suddenly. Though she instantly cursed herself for saying it, there wasn't anything that she could have done to stop it. It came up too quickly, cementing itself from the vague form of thought into solid words before she was hardly aware of it.

"To help you with the dishes." He replied nonchalantly. "Wouldn't be very gentlemanly of me to leave you to do it all by yourself, would it?"

"Quit pretending to be a gentleman, you're not fooling anyone." Tobry laughed.

"And you I would like to fool least of all, my dear SPARTAN. But I'm finding that you awaken a side of me that sometimes wants to be a gentleman. Does that sound so crazy?"

And in truth it did. Six had a rule about never letting people change you, the irony being that she was exactly who she was because a team of someone's had changed her. But she didn't tell Tobry that. If his wanting to be a gentleman for her made him crazy then the fact that he awoke in her a side that desperately wanted to be a woman, a real woman surely meant that she was certifiable.

"Why are you really here with me?" she asked, eager to abandon the subject of their rapidly vanishing sanity. Tobry shrugged in response, which annoyed Six. Either he didn't understand what she so desperately wanted for him to make sense of, or he didn't care. Either choice made him annoying and arrogant and impossible.

"It's fun with you." He grinned, that lopsided cocky grin that Six hated how much she loved. "'Sides where else would I be?"

"Anywhere but doing the dishes if you weren't such a loser."

"If it's all the same to you, I'd rather be a loser and stick around."

Every logical, Noble Six controlled bone in her body wanted to tell him how stupid and mushy he sounded. She wanted to tell him that she was going to lose her lunch, if he didn't stop talking like an idiot.

But all the parts of her that liked to think illogical, silly things; like how beautiful his laugh was, or how that stupid smile of his was better light than sunshine, seemed to find his stupid remark perfect. Like the call of victory after battle.

"S your funeral." She shrugged back at him.

That infuriating grin stretched even further across Tobry's face. "So why're you here exactly, if anything is preferable to the dishes?"

She had never known anyone in the world that she hated more than Tobry Lager. No one in the world at this moment deserved to die more than him. Who did he think he was? Calling her out on all the things she would rather just quietly ignore. It was bad enough that she felt them, and even worse that he knew it all anyway. Asking her to say it out loud was adding insult to injury. She wasn't going to play along. She didn't him to force uncomfortable truths out of her, no matter how much she might mean them. So instead of telling him the truth, or making up some lie, she filled a bowl with soapy rinse water and upended it over his head.

The water dripped down his face, leaving glistening drops on his furry cheeks and soaking into his shirt, as he stood there merely blinking at her. For a moment Six was unsure if he would be angry, but slowly his grin returned. Six smirked at him.

"It's an improvement to your looks, really." Chuckling lightly, Tobry reached out and pulled her into his wet chest.

"What exactly was that for?" he asked as Six brought a hand up to brush the water off his cheek.

"For being an ass." She said simply, and he laughed again.

Six leaned forward and kissed him, partly because she wanted to, but mostly because she was sure he was about to and wanted to beat him to the punch.

They stayed like that for an indeterminate period of time. It could have been minutes, it could have been hours. It could have been weeks. But eventually the protesting cries of their oxygen deprived lungs forced them apart.

"What was that for?" Tobry asked, the strange gentle look back on his face, and the terrifyingly out of character tenderness was back in his voice.

She shrugged, no longer concerned with how honest she was being.

"Because I don't know where else I would be right now."

Tobry replied by kissing her again, all traces of gentleness gone as he crushed her body to his. Six responded enthusiastically, completely at ease in the knowledge that he had understood her perfectly.

End
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